

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A method for producing a cordierite honeycomb structure comprising the step of firing a honeycomb formed body, the step comprising control of a temperature rise rate from 1200°C to 1250°C to be 40°C/hr or more, from 1250°C to 1300°C to be 2 to 40°C/hr, and from 1300°C to 1400°C to be 40°C/hr or more.
2. (Original) A method for producing a honeycomb structure according to Claim 1, wherein a honeycomb structure having a porosity of 50 to 70%, a mean pore diameter of 15 to 30 μm , and difference in mean pore diameter between in a central portion and in an outer peripheral portion is 5 μm or less is produced.
3. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a honeycomb structure according to Claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein a honeycomb structure having a diameter of 100 mm or more and a length of 100 mm or more is produced.
4. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a honeycomb structure according to ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 ~~to~~ 3, wherein a honeycomb structure having a thermal expansion coefficient of $1.0 \times 10^{-6}/^{\circ}\text{C}$ or less in each of the central portion and the outer peripheral portion is produced.
5. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a honeycomb structure according to ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 ~~to~~ 4, wherein a honeycomb structure having an A-axis

compression strength of 1.5 MPa or more in each of the central portion and the outer peripheral portion is produced.

6. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a honeycomb structure according to ~~any one of Claims-1 to 5~~, wherein a honeycomb structure having an isostatic strength of 1.0 MPa or more is produced.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a honeycomb structure according to ~~any one of Claims-1 to 6~~, wherein firing is performed after inserting slurry for plugging into the formed body under pressure.

8. (Original) A honeycomb structure made of cordierite and having a porosity of 50 to 70%, a mean pore diameter of 15 to 30 μm , a difference in a mean pore diameter of 5 μm or less between in the central portion and in the outer peripheral portion, a thermal expansion coefficient of $1.0 \times 10^{-6}/^{\circ}\text{C}$ or less in each of the central portion and the outer peripheral portion, and an A-axis compression strength of 1.5 MPa or more in each of the central portion and the outer peripheral portion.

9. (Original) A honeycomb structure according to Claim 8, which has an isostatic strength of 1.0 MPa or more.